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NEW! composer 2 composer
R. Murray Schafer interviewed by Paul Steenhuisen

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Friday, November 23, 2001
8 pm concert, 7 pm pre-concert talk
Massey Hall
2001 Massey Hall New Music Festival

GUEST ARTISTS: Simon Fryer / cello,
Romam Borys / cello, Paul Widner / cello,
Duo Turgeon / pianos, Isobelle Schnaider /
flute, Stuart Laughton / trumpet

COMPOSERS:
Krysztof Penderecki (Poland)
Concerto Grosso, for three cellos and orchestra
North American Premiere

Alex Pauk (Canada)
Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra
World Premiere

Robert Aitken (Canada)
Shadows V, concerto for flute & orchestra
North American Premiere

R. Murray Schofer (Canada)
The Falcon's Trumpet, concerto for trumpet
& orchestra

toothpaste

starring Barbara Hannigan

featuring Thomas Goerz

Wednesday, February 6, 2002
8 pm concert, 7:15 pm pre-concert talk
Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre

presented with the generous support of Roger D. Moore

GUEST ARTISTS: Barbara Hannigan / soprano,
Thomas Goerz / baritone

COMPOSERS:
Alexina Loake (Canada)
Don Redican, librettist (Canada)
Toothpaste, a short comedic domestic opera
World Concert Premiere

John Rea (Canada)
Alma & Askan, World Premiere of new version for
soprano & baritone with chamber orchestra

Michel van der Hee (The Netherlands)
Here (To be Found), for soprano, orchestra
& tape. North American Premiere

Claude Vivier (Canada)
Boucharda, for soprano & orchestra

Harry Freedman (Canada)
Graphic 9: for Harry Somers
(This concert pays special tribute to
Harry Freedman & Mary Morrison)
The Donemus Foundation
The Royal Netherlands Embassy

The weekend
(Young Composers Festival)

Friday, March 1, 2002
8 pm concert, 7:15 pm pre-concert talk
Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre

GUEST ARTISTS: Molinari Quartet, TBA / piano
COMPOSERS:
György Kurtág (Hungary)

Poems of Ecstasy
A/Ex Pauk, conductor
presented in collaboration with the
2002 Toronto International Choral Festival

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multimedia extravaganza
• live video environment
• lasers
• special lighting
• film/video projection
• dance

Thursday, June 13, 2002
8 pm concert, 7:15 pm pre-concert event
venue TBA

Poems of Ecstasy
Alex Pauk, conductor
presented in collaboration with the
2002 Toronto International Choral Festival

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Sun, Sept. 23 at 3:30 PM

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WHOLENOTE'S CD FORUM

Disc(s) of the Month

- Mahler: Symphony No. 8, Vienna Philharmonic (Walter): New York Philharmonic (Bernstein)

New Releases

- Forgotten Songs, Forgotten Loves: Nielson, Kortgaard

- Transcendental Litzt: Janina Fialkowska

- Violons d'Enfer/Infernal Violins: Angelie Dubeau

- Don Giovanni/Legatole's Revenge: Daniil Hvorostovsky

- Constantinople: Netsay Islam

Concert Preparation

- Michael J. Baker: Big Pictures: Barbara Hanigan, Arrynmusic

- Olivier Messiaen: Quartet for the End of Time: Amici

- R. Murray Schafer: Patria: The Schafer Ensemble

- Alban Berg: Violin Concerto: Anne-Sophie Mutter

- Schonberg: Erwartung: Giuseppe Sinopoli

- J.S. Bach: Obligato Harpsichord Sonatas: Genevieve Soly

- Prayers: Sund Jo

Weeza Repeating

- Folio - Canadian Woodwind Quintets: The York Winds

- Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky: Albany Berg Quartet

- Sibelius - 2nd Symphony/Beethoven - 5th Symphony: Concertgebouw, George Szell

-In Print

- Retrospectives Vol. 1: Antonin Kubalek, piano

- American Dreaming: Marc Couroux, piano

SEPTEMBER 1, 2001 – OCTOBER 7, 2001 WholeNote 5
1. OVERVIEW
by Allan Pulker
Welcome to our seventh season.
Peter Sandor
It is a problem as old as music, the relationship of music to money.

Monica Whicher
Monica Whicher Roy Thomson Hall on of the city. Among the performers Herbig of who he was will be missed. guest conductor and former of music to the community of Toronto and benefactor of concert tickets, and to keep artists. He understood the Mozart Society gave opportunities or since.

Mozart has, an musical education in the lives of the very best of times. Not the part. His influence will, of course, be announced till after the run of performances, when the TSO will reveal the answer on their website. Sounds like fun for all us wannabe musicologists. And, who knows, maybe the daily press’s three distinguished critics will risk their scholarly reputations and add to the fun by putting their guesses in print!

Armenian. Sept 16 Toronto’s own stratospheric soprano, Isabel Bayrakdarian will be part of a performance at the Toronto Centre for the Arts of Armenian liturgical music under the direction of Raffi Armenian. Maestro Armenian’s own words probably tell us all we need to know about this performance: “Isabel is very involved in the Armenian Church [and]... very much in the religious world. ... for Armenians the church has been somehow the root of our survival... such a concert tells people that this faith is still very much in the religious world. ... for Armenians the...”

Armenian’s own stratospheric soprano, Isabel Bayrakdarian will be part of a performance at the Toronto Centre for the Arts of Armenian liturgical music under the direction of Raffi Armenian. Maestro Armenian’s own words probably tell us all we need to know about this performance: “Isabel is very involved in the Armenian Church [and]... very much in the religious world. ... for Armenians the church has been somehow the root of our survival... such a concert tells people that this faith is still alive.” Tickets are going fast.

My colleagues’ contributions to Concert Notes show, as always, the scope of the music scene, even in the season’s quiet periods; when the sparse are part of the story, the mainstay of our survival... such a concert that await us in the season’s quiet periods; when the sparse are part of the story, the mainstay of our survival... such a concert...”

The Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra begins their season with Baroque Masterworks (Sept 19, 20, 21, 22, 23), a rich selection from the masters: Bach, Vivaldi, Handel and Telemann. Visit their website at www.tafelmusik.org.

The Toronto Early Music Centre’s 17th annual Early Music Festival begins with a host of concerts on Sept 19-23.

2. EARLY MUSIC
by Frank Nakashima
Given the relative paucity of concerts in September, Early Music is off to a flying start.

The wonderful lunch hour series Music Mondays at the Church of the Holy Trinity near the Eaton Centre presents, among many kinds of music, these early music offerings: I Furiosi Baroque Ensemble (Sept 3), and the a cappella vocal quartet Voyces Past (Sept 10). This is their 10th anniversary season of pay-what-you-can presentations.

The Toronto Early Music Players Organization (TEMPO) workshop (Sept 9), features treasures from Scotland and Norway, led by historical clarinet specialist Colin Savage. Co-founder of Baroque Music Beside the Grange Colin also performs on modern clarinet with the Mississauga Symphony. Workshops begin promptly at 1:30pm and end at 4pm. Individual workshops are $20; annual dues, which include most Sunday workshops, are $60. Recorderists, Violas da gamba, and other early instruments welcome! See Ecteetera File, p. 28 for further details.

The Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra begins their season with Baroque Masterworks (Sept 19, 20, 21, 22, 23), a rich selection from the masters: Bach, Vivaldi, Handel and Telemann. Visit their website at www.tafelmusik.org.

The Toronto Early Music Centre’s 17th annual Early Music Festival begins with a host of concerts on Sept 19-23.

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**2001-02 Season • Chamber Music Downtown**

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SEPTEMBER 1, 2001 – OCTOBER 7, 2001 Wholenote 7


Isadora Duncan, dance

And dance OREMUS danse also presents the stellar Montreal harpsichordist Geneviève Soly (reviewed in our CD section this month) in a solo recital (October 1) entitled “Les Grandes Suites,” in which she performs suites by Handel, Bach and lesser-known-but-equally accomplished, Graupner. Visit www.dancemusudanse.org.

Finally, Bach devotees will definitely enjoy the Arbor Oak Trio’s musical tribute (October 3) in the intimate setting of the Upper Library, Massey College. Details of concerts mentioned here can be found in our comprehensive concert listings, commencing on page 22.

Frank T. Nakshima (frankmak@interlog.com) is the President of the Toronto Early Music Centre, a non-profit charitable organization. Tel: (416) 966-1409, e-mail: temc@interlog.com. Website: http://www.interlog.com/~temc

3. CHORAL SCENE
by Larry Beckwith

Geneviève Soly

Spine-tingling harmonies -- Darbazi K’alebi:
Andrea Kuzmich, Bie Engelen, Sam Hirsi & Becca Whitta

The day after Labour Day fast approaches and choirs across the city will be returning and dusting off the vocal cords for another year of communal music-making. September is usually a slow month in terms of choral concerts, but there are a few highlights that fans of the choral art won’t want to miss.

The Music Mondays series at the Church of the Holy Trinity features two unusual vocal ensembles this month. On Sept 10, the Renaissance women’s group Voces Past appears. This is a group of singers whose members met in high school and have been performing together for many years. Their repertoire features arrangements of sacred and secular music from the 17th century and earlier. And later in the month (Sept 24) is a concert I wrote about in my last column, by Becca Whitta and Darbazi K’alebi, singing music for women’s voices from the Georgian Republic.

The following day also at the Church of the Holy Trinity, Critical Mass begins its 2001-2002 season with a performance at 12:10 of the Missa de Beata Virgine by Josquin des Prez. All proceeds will go to the Out of the Cold program.

On Sept 25, the Mozart Society of Toronto’s tribute to the life of Peter Sandor will feature sopranos Monica Whicher and Isabel Bayrakdarian along with a choir put together by David Fallis.

And on Sept 29 the Ontario Youth Choir gives its annual concert in Toronto at

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Yorkminster Park Baptist Church. This year’s choir is conducted by the Kingston-based composer and choral conductor Mark Sirett and the concert features music by Peter Togni, Orlando Gibbons, Leonard Bernstein and Sergei Rachmaninoff.

Looking ahead, some of the plans for the 2002 Joy of Singing choral festival have already been made public. At a press conference in August to announce the upcoming Roy Thomson/Massey Hall season, Nicholas Goldschmidt took to the podium to outline eight concerts that will take place at Massey Hall during

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“Why not visit us for our Arts Week A Cappella Showcase on Sept. 24th”
With the summer comes a break from the plethora of new music events in Toronto, the virtual cessation of weekly (or more) gatherings of familiar faces at concerts. So the summer season becomes a time of uninterrupted concentration for composers, engaged in writing the new pieces that will now be premiered throughout the coming season.

I love hearing new work. Witnessing recent pieces, we are involved in a beautiful kind of unfiltered hearing. As our own time passes into history, its works will become "representative", so it is only here and now, in the moment, that the number of pieces and types we hear is at its most varied — less filtered, unbridled and wilder. I appreciate this opportunity to witness. I am freer to like a work or not, less constrained to conform to a refined and clear view the way a retrospective musico-lolgical definition of the zeitgeist eventually will. There is always more out there in the moment worth hearing than history will tell.

**ARRAYMUSIC** celebrates the life of former Artistic Director Michael J. Baker, at the Music Gallery's new home, St. George-the-Martyr Church, on Sunday, Sept. 16, the first anniversary of his passing. Performing music he wrote specifically for the ensemble, the concert also features the launch of "In Paradisum: The Music of Michael J. Baker", a new Artifact Music CD consisting of the music he composed for choreographer James Kudelka. Following the concert, the evening continues just down the road at The Rivoli (Side Bar). The concert will include Animated Shorts 1 & 2 (1984), La vie de bohème (1993), red brick (1991), The Wald (1993), Twins (1992), and Columbus (1988). Of The Wald, a virtuosic marimba solo written for Rick Sacks, Baker wrote: "The marimba player uses the instrument to trigger far-away electronic events that subtly shadow the music he is playing. Mr. Sacks, who is an avid science fiction fan, suggested the title after a story by Robert Heinlein. Because of this story, the term "wald" is now commonly used to describe a mechanical extension of the human body."

Twins, and red brick are from Baker’s multidisciplinary work Big Pictures, which "dwell in the realm of the possible — the understanding of possibilities... becoming an artist, or making a work of art. It is therefore about the process of transforming images or patterns from the familiar to the poetic."

On Sept 29, Eve Egoyan also performs at St. George-the-Martyr; new pieces by Allison Cameron, Stephen Parkinson, Martin Arnold (Rat-Drifting), John Abram (Carnival Evenings), and Rudolph Komorous (The Chinese Box), and Linda C. Smith’s “Bloom”, which Egoyan evocatively described as "the essence of a piece - fragrant, wafting, transparent". Bloom was written by composer Udo Kater after the performance of his extensive work 80 Flowers, based on the poems by Louis Zukofsky, and also refers to listening to the resonance of chords when played on the piano — the bloom of the strings' vibration. Arnold’s Rat-Drifting takes its name from the colloquial term “rat-running”, the practice of driving through residential side streets to avoid congested main roads. For Arnold, it’s "a happy metaphor for a kind of music-making: it has all that off-the-beaten-track stuff going for it but, more significantly, it suggests taking an activity to a place where it isn’t intended, using something in a way it isn’t meant for, unintentionally disturbing someplace comfortable".

Last, I draw your attention to four other concerts:

R. Murray Schafer’s Palace of the Cannabar Phoenix (see my interview with Schafer on page 14);

the St. Lawrence String Quartet’s performance of Miracles in Mud by Jonathan Berger, a faculty member at Stanford University, October 4, at the Faculty of Music and later that day in a Music Toronto concert in the Jane Mallet Theatre;

the Sept 15 TSO/Toronto Film Festival’s Dracula: Nosferatu silent film presentation with live-to-picture orchestral performance; and,

Sept 22, Earshot’s Sleigh of Hand, featuring new works for piano by Denning, Farah, Good, Hannah & Matey, performed by John Farah, piano.
September Song

September is one of the major markets in North America, which means that we are “on the circuit” for the big names who come and play concert halls. And a good thing, too; but it is the week to week activity in clubs and smaller concert venues which makes this a “jazz town.”

This month is a perfect case in point. There’s not much in the large concert halls, but that does not mean any shortage of good music in the smaller “lifeblood” venues, ranging from churches to neighbourhood bars.

Two clubs, The Montreal Bistro and Top O’ The Senator regularly feature a blend of out of town guests, mainly from the States, and local musicians, while the others, most notably The Rex, give much needed prominence to the Toronto musicians. (Compare this to the lull which falls over Montreal as soon as the jazz festival is over; you could fire a cannon without hitting a high note!)

This month alone, in clubs, you can enjoy a wide spectrum of jazz ranging from The Hot Five Jazzmasters at C’Est What on a Saturday afternoon to Kenny Wheeler at The Montreal Bistro, Benny Green at the Top O’ The Senator or Hugh Fraser at The Rex. And the season’s just beginning. (A little plug for your humble scribe; I’ll be at the Bistro for the week of Sept 25 with ace clarinet player, Allan Vache.)
Time again for our annual list of bands in the Greater Toronto Area. I’ve done my best to verify the information presented here—all of the websites are active (though many are not up to date)! So some bands may find they have just their name and rehearsal night presented—we’ll be happy to update your listing on our website if you get us the info (hint, hint!).

Here we go, by rehearsal day:

**Monday**

### East York Concert Band
**Conductor:** Ernie Walker  
**Website:** http://home.earthlink.net/~ewalkera  
**Rehearsals:** 7:30 p.m. at Earl Haig S.S., 163, 100 Princess Ave. North York. Instruments needed: percussion, oboe, low brass, horn, trumpets, clarinets

**North York Community Band**
**Conductor:** John Edward Liddle  
**Website:** www.convband.ca  
**Rehearsals:** 7:30 p.m. at Emmanuel United Church, Upper Ottawa & Mohawk. Instruments needed: all

**Tuesday**

### Brampton Concert Band
**Conductor:** Darryl Eaton  
**Contact:** David Harmsworth  
**Website:** www.bramtonband.ca  
**Rehearsals:** Thursdays, 7:30 p.m. at Brampton Civic Centre, 150 Central Park Dr. Brampton Instruments needed: all

**Wednesday**

### Festival Wind Orchestra
**Conductor:** Gennady Gelfer  
**Contact:** Shelley Goodman (416) 491-1883  
**Website:** http://www.festivalwindorchestra.lovemusic.com  
**Rehearsals:** 7:30 p.m. at Earl Haig S.S., room 163, 100 Princess Ave. North York. Instruments needed: percussion, oboe, low brass, low reeds, trumpets, clarinets

### Etoiboke Community Concert Band
**Conductor:** John Edward Liddle  
**Contact:** Sue Kay (416) 233-1394  
**Website:** www.interlog.com/~ecbc  
**Rehearsals:** 7:30 p.m. at Etoiboke C.L., 86 Montgomery Rd. Etoiboke. Instruments needed: bass clarinet, bassoon

**Thursday**

### Chinguacousy Community Band
**Conductor:** TBA  
**Contact:** Al Bourque (905) 455-1917  
**Website:** www.chinguacousyorchestra.ca  
**Rehearsals:** 7:30 p.m. at Brampton Civic Centre, 150 Central Park Dr. Brampton Instruments needed: all

### Vaughan Community Band
**Conductor:** Barbara Hennessey  
**Contact:** Janet Cringle (905) 987-1569  
**Website:** www.vcb.ca  
**Rehearsals:** Thursdays, 7:30 p.m. at Bowm anville St. S.P., 105 Queen St., Newmarket Instruments needed: all

### Friday**

**North York Community Band**
**Conductor:** John Edward Liddle  
**Contact:** Barb Martin (416) 927-8287  
**Website:** peter.chestley@compuServe.com  
**Rehearsals:** 5 p.m., Venue TBA - call for info Instruments needed: clarinets, bassoon, flutes

**Saturday**

**Sunday**

**Swansea**
**Conductor:** Frank Evans  
**Contact:** Michelle Spring  
**Website:** 925 Bloor St. W.  
**Rehearsals:** 7:30 p.m. at Western Technical and Commercial School, 123 Evelyn Cres. Instruments needed: reeds, low brass

**Northdale Concert Band**
**Conductor:** Stephen Chamote  
**Contact:** 7:30 p.m. at Willowdale United Church, 349 Kenneth Ave., North York. Instruments needed: bassoon, percussion

**Double blues**
For those of you who are football fans, Argonotes, the Toronto Argonauts Band are looking for players to fill out their ranks for the remainder of the CFL season. If you subscribe to their philosophy “lifter + louder = better”, then give Musical Dictator (not a typo) Steve Hayman a call at 416-769-2847, or go to their website www.argonotes.com.

**U of T**
Also, if you’re a Hart House member (U of T students, staff, alumni) you can play with the Hart House Symphonic Band. The group rehearses Tuesdays from 6:30-9:30 in the Great Hall at Hart House. Conductor Keith Reid always picks challenging material—traditional and contemporary band rep, plus some orchestral transcriptions. For info on the band, or Hart House membership, call Linda Orfmann at 416-978-5363.

OK band fans…21 possible places to play this season. Get out there and make some music!

Merlin Williams can be reached at (416) 489-0275 (h), or on the web at www.netcom.ca/~merlinw or by e-mail: merlinw@netcom.ca.
Their progress looks so steady, catalogued this way, that it's easy to lose sight of the magnitude of the achievement. SLQ second violinist, Barry Shiffman, talks about how inspiring it was in the difficult early years to see how much more fulfilled Ken Perkins (Orford second violinist) was as a Quartet member than as an orchestral musician. "But the difficulties encountered by any quartet or ensemble starting out are vast," Shiffman said. "For me the first was learning to deal with three other personalities in such an intimate way. A string quartet has been likened to a marriage, but in a marriage there is the advantage of being in love."

The next difficulty was the sheer struggle to earn money. "The reality was we lived like students for ten years after we graduated. Our classmates were landing good orchestral jobs, buying houses, taking trips; we were still learning to play with each other." Also difficult was "believing in our worth as an ensemble. It takes time" Shiffman says. "We didn't really sound good together for a long time. It was not until winter of 1990 that we gave our first concert, arranged by Dennis Brott, each one also involving an established artist to play with us - James Campbell, Anton Kuerti and Jaime Laredo. By the third concert we had an amazing following of people - that was encouraging."

For violist, Lesley Robertson, winning the Banff competition was "a message we were on the right track, even though it was an experience I wouldn't want to repeat." (Interestingly, at press time for this article, SLQ's cellist, Marina Hoover, was at Banff, judging at this year's competition.)

Their current position at Stanford has brought a significant easing. "We would, of course, have to choose the most expensive city in North America" says Shiffman. "But, yes, it has provided a solid financial situation and, most importantly, a home, a community of musicians and colleagues, a place to come back to after a couple of weeks in no man's land on the road."

Being on the road, up to 200 nights a year, is simply a reality of being a chamber musician. In his May 21 article on the SLQ The New Yorker's Alex Ross explains: "To make a living in this field, you have to be willing to play almost anywhere..."
and at any time. " So while the SLQ has played Wigmore and Carnegie Hall, and the Paris Opera, it has also played school auditoriums across Canada, the US, and even South America. A children's concert I attended in a community centre gym in Ottawa, part of the 2000 Ottawa Chamber Music Festival, was as engaging as those I heard at the Jana Maler Theatre in 1996 or at Tabor Hall during the 2001 Ottawa Festival. The SLQ at their best always seem to go beyond interpretation to something like ownership. Composer, Patrick Cardy, whose "Zodiac Dances" the SLQ performed at Ottawa this past summer, agrees. "I have seen them late in the rehearsal process, thinking about literally every note; they give this energy to everything they do. And they get better as they live with a piece. I was there when your photographer was. He wanted something energetic, so they played the Schaffer Third String Quartet, which has been in their repertoire for some time. It was absolutely riveting — internalized, completely spontaneous and fresh."

I asked Shiffman about the Schaffer Third. It's a particular favourite he said, "a masterpiece, so moving and entertaining, even after 20 years." It was their first Schaffer and they tried to reach him when learning it. "We were going to play it in several concerts in Europe and really wanted his input but we just didn't connect. So, off we went."

Delayed at the airport twice, it was the day of the concert when they arrived in Paris. "When we got to our hotel, "Shiffman recalled, "the clerk told me my uncle was waiting, well, my one uncle, as far as anyone knew, had no taste for Paris - Las Vegas maybe, but not Paris." The "uncle" turned out to be Murray Schafer, who had tracked them down and flown to be with them. "We were blown away, took the train together to the location, had a meal and a rehearsal. He liked what we had done."

Shiffman remembers the audience response. "It was spectacularly so a contemporary piece of music so capture the imagination of the audience. We got calls asking us to change programs to include it."

Their affinity for Schafer's music continues. In summer 2000 they premiered 4-40, for string quartet and orchestra, with the CBC Vancouver Orchestra and have also performed other of his string quartets. What makes Schafer special, according to Shiffman, is his sense of humour. "Humour is probably the most difficult element to weave into music. Murray is in my opinion the composer most successful at incorporating humour since Joseph Haydn."

It's the same with all the music we learn, Haydn to Schafer. Our first approach is to tackle the piece's main character. I know some groups work the other way, getting everything in tune first, but we always try first to enter the emotion. It's an evolution. We don't just prepare, get it right and go in front of an audience. Performance in front of an audience, to find out what does and doesn't work, is preparation. That's why I have always been surprised by Glenn Gould. For us there are three elements — composer, musicians and audience."

Nowhere is the SLQ's special rapport with its audiences clearer than in the theatrical physicality of first violinist, Geoff Nuttall, ranging from fiery intensity to casual nonchalance, with "an airy, vocal freedom, exhibiting a distinct personality lacking in many better-known soloists" as Alex Ross puts it. It is an ability to harness a seemingly limitless technique to a soaring musical imagination. And it helps make combinations of performances that are right on the edge.

Music Toronto's Jennifer Taylor had this to say: "People are immediately drawn to their energy and exuberance. They are often very specifically about the SLQ. Toronto audience that we have been watching and hearing since 1992 when they first performed for us, so we think of them as our own. I'm sure you've heard informally that everyone calls them "the kids", and I gather they've even got over resenting that. This is sort of home base for them, and we've loved seeing them grow. It's fun to watch their high octane energy draw everyone in the audience into the performance."

There won't be any Schafer or Haydn at either of their two concerts in Toronto on October 4. Their contemporary piece is "Miracles in Mud", composed by Stanford colleague, Jonathan Berger. They will also play Tchaikovsky's String Quartet #1, from their new CD, scheduled for release next month.

This twelfth anniversary of their beginnings in Toronto opens the thirtieth season for Music Toronto, who, according to Lesley Robertson, "were unfailingly supportive" and whose quarter-in-residence appointment afforded the SLQ opportunity for significant development in their profuse musicianship and remarkable audience rapport.

For more than 30 years, renegade Canadian composer R. Murray Schafer has been writing his 12-part "Patria" cycle. "Patria" (meaning "homeland") traverses space, time, and knowledge in a story that despite its breadth remains uniquely Canadian. To me, Schafer's work propagates awareness of the vast intellectual and natural richness of the world, so it was with pleasure that I accepted the opportunity to talk with him, composer to composer.

Our primary subject was his most recent Patria piece, "The Palace of the Cinnabar Phoenix" (Patria 8), which will be premiered September 13 through 16, 2001, at Wolferton Hills on the Oak Ridges Moraine. A fantasy based in reality, the story of "The Palace of the Cinnabar Phoenix" is set in China during the T'ang Dynasty (618-907). Emperor Wei Lu bemoans the disappearance of the Cinnabar Phoenix, and with it, the loss of peace and harmony.

The Emperor and his court have made their annual pilgrimage to the Lake of Dragons with the hope that the Sunken Palace and the Cinnabar Phoenix will appear once again and restore harmony.

In promotional materials for the piece, you're quoted as saying "This is my Falstaff." What do you mean?

"It's a reference to Verdi's only enduring comic opera; The Palace of the Cinnabar Phoenix is lighter and more tuneful than some of the other Patria pieces, possibly the lightest."

How would you describe the piece? Is it opera? Music theatre?

I call Patria "music dramas." They have a lot of dramatic elements that most opera doesn't have — spoken material, and theatrical effects that are not really part of the domain of opera. Although, there are more continuous singing in Cinnabar than some of the others. Perhaps this one is closer to opera, but I don't like that term. I find it very confining."

If we lived in Europe and got commissions for some of the others."

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Do you feel that you're developing a new genre?"

Certainly some of the pieces are. I don't think this one is, I think it's more conventional, but Princess of the Stars is outside of the traditional genres, as are The Greatest Show, Ra, and The Wolf Project - they're way way outside.

Was it a pre-compositional decision to make this piece lighter?

Yes, it fits the cycle. The rudder of the whole cycle is Ra (Patria 6), and Hysterium (Patria 7), which are the heaviest and the most difficult. After those I wanted to have 3 lighter pieces, almost as if through some kind of levitation you'd entered a world of fairy tales. Cinnabar is one of those, along with The Enchanted Forest and The Spirit Garden. All 3 are closer to being family pieces.

So the whole cycle has a shape? Yes. Not as a practical performance sequence. It's not possible. Princess of the Stars occurs at 5 o'clock in the morning; Ra runs 11 hours, all night long. The Wolf Project runs 8 days. Each work is totally self-contained, but there is a shaping in my own mind - certain recurring themes, contexts and characters.

The main theme is of a man and a woman searching for one another, after being broken apart at the very beginning. The Princess of the stars descended to earth and was wounded by Wolf. She escapes, and moves through various cultures and various societies under the earthly name Ariadne, constantly pursued by Wolf, who wants to apologize. It's only when he does this finally, and renounces his savagery that the Princess is able to return to the stars. That's the theme that unites the two.

Wolf and Ariadne reappear in the various pieces in many different guises, travelling to many parts of the world - Ancient Egypt, Crete, Medieval Europe, modern metropoli, and in this case China, in order to explore some of the philosophical ideas in that part of the world.
As well, there are material relations between the pieces. Though musically they are quite different, there's a Patria “row” in all of them. Not all the music is based on it, but a lot of it is. It’s an all-interval tone row, on which the whole of Princess of the Stars is written.

In addition to exploring different parts of the world in the Patria pieces, and a different time period/philosophical setting for each place, each work is multi-sensory - “a feast for the senses,” you called it.

Yes, they all are, in one way or another. In Ra every scene uses a different incense, and each god has a different perfume. Some of the other works, including this one, have food involved. There is a “Banquet of Celestial Harmony” in Cinnabar for the court and audience. To have the audience watch while the puppets eat their food (laughs) would be unfortunate. It’s not going to be a feast, but we will have something for the audience, eating their morsels synchronized with music. It’s part of a much much larger idea that I’ve always had, that I tried to use in the Spirit Garden, for the many courses to all correspond to pieces of music specially composed, and the program would explain the correspondence - flying in the face of universal muzak.

And breaking down the audience/performer barrier.

That’s true. In all the pieces, one way or another, the audience is involved. In The Enchanted Forest, they accompany the children through the forest to protect them. In Cinnabar, there isn’t a great deal, other than the banquet, oh, and the fact that every time the Emperor speaks, the audience is to stand up and bow. I don’t know if they actually will, and if they don’t maybe the emperor won’t speak; but it’s just a few little things, to make them feel that somehow they’re not just sitting slothily in their fauteuil digesting their dinner.

Ceremonial involvement…?

Yes. In this case, it’s fairly light, but it’s definitely present. In other Patria works, the involvement is very ceremonial and ritualistic, but in this work I’d say modestly present. A family work, you said…

I think so. First of all, it involves puppets. When I first thought of the work it felt as though this incredibly magnificent T’ang dynasty of China would need impossibly huge resources - chariots, pagoda boats, millions of warriors, and an orchestra of 5000! So I reversed the thing, and miniaturized the characters instead -- distant, remote, dignified -- a light-hearted, ceremonial presence near the water, and there’s action in the water and on the water – dragons, and people who do tai-chi on the water. It’s definitely festive.

Why outdoors?

I like working outdoors. I wanted a pond. With the miniaturization, a small pond about 100 metres long. I looked around Toronto, without finding anything quiet or remote enough. Eventually I found this. Private property, about 200 acres.

Is the piece site-specific?

Yes. It might be able to be re-created indoors, if the fake components instead were filmed, but that wouldn’t be as interesting. That might be something for after I’m gone.

You live and work in a rural setting, placing many of your performances directly on the land, in the trees, on or by a lake, yet a large portion of the people who come to hear your work live in an urban environment. Is there a particular idea you would like them to leave with?

We don’t have the respect for nature and the environment that is necessary if humanity is going to survive at all. Anything that incorporates natural elements into the work is important. With the “enchanted forest” after the performance people talked and talked about the incredible moment when the clouds parted and the wolf howled - this could never be choreographed, but we created the opportunity for it! If you know your country will happen, it’s likely that things will happen... as the soothsayer says, the wind in the trees and the way the leaves are being blown will indicate how the plot is going to develop.

And with Princess of the Stars, she is imprisoned in the bottom of the lake - if the princess is in the lake, you’re not going to pollute it, are you? That may be what native people everywhere in the world had in mind, why they were such good ecologists, because the land was full of spirits, and if you damage it, you may disturb the tree gods, and the gods of the land and water.

With the current rate of land development and environmental erosion in Ontario, the trees of this performance landscape could be replaced by condos, the water a hazard, the air unbreathable. How do you respond?

More needs to be done. Artists can participate, but many don’t. They certainly aren’t required to, but even those that do perhaps don’t understand that you have to go WITH nature. There’s no point taking pictures of trees and putting them on the internet, you have to work with nature itself. Whether or not my outdoor works endure, as Whitby becomes the core of an expanding Toronto, I don’t know. Regardless, many of the Patria works are engaged, which used to mean “in a political sense”, socialist. There’s a message implicit in all of my outdoor pieces. There’s a world out there that we’re neglecting at our own peril. And it’s a very beautiful world.

Details:
Thursday Sunday, September 13-16, 7:30 p.m. (except on a wet Monday) at Whistle Stop Venue, 196 Wolfe Road, Pontypool, 90 minutes north-east of Toronto (north of Hwy. 35/115 interchange of Hwy. 7, 401), and 40 minutes west of Peterborough.

Tickets: $35 for adults, and $20 students, available by calling (705) 876-6233 or 1-800-814-0055. In the event of rain, an additional performance will be given Monday, September 17.


Performers: Alex Pauk, Jane Archibald, Eleanor James, Eric Shaw, Gregory Dahl, Joel Katz, Joanne Crook, Liu Fang, George Gao, Fujiko Imashiki, Robert Aitken, Stuart Laughton, Bob Becker, Ryan Scott, Joe Muscolillo.

For more information, visit www.patria.org

For advance study, see: T’ang dynasty/Chinese philosophy, Don’t forget, this is an outdoor performance! Chairs and bleachers are provided, or you may sit on the grass.
Phoenix Reborn in Wolverton Hills: Schafer opera burns bright for September

By Sarah B. Hood

START IRONING those white flares: everything ‘70s is back again... including Saturday Night Fever. This time it’s a musical cascade of disco nostalgia with immortal Bee Gees numbers like “Stayin’ Alive,” “Night Fever” and “How Deep is Your Love”. Opening Sept 5 at the Canon (formerly Pantages) Theatre. 416-872-1212

BUT THE REALLY BIG SHOW is R. Murray Schafer’s epic Chinese fairy tale The Palace of the Cinnabar Phoenix, running Sept 13 to 16 on a lake in the Wolverton Hills, about an hour east of Toronto. If you follow Schafer’s work, you’ll know he’s the author of the spectacular Patria Ra, including the 12-hour Ra at the Ontario Science Centre in 1983 and the midnight spectacle The Alchemical Theatre of Hermes Trismagistos at Union Station in 1992.

Schafer is keeping his designers, Jerrard and Diana Smith, especially busy this season; not only on Cinnabar Phoenix (Patria 8), but also on the two-part The Spirit Garden (Patria 10), a planting ritual on the grounds of the St. Norbert Arts Centre south of Winnipeg.

“We were there the whole month of May,” says Jerrard, who will return for the Nov 2 ritual burning of the garden that was planted in a nightly pageant from May 24 to 26.

Meanwhile for Phoenix, he and Diana Smith are busy creating ornate Tang Dynasty robes, a seaworthy Pagoda Boat and a Palace, alongside David and Ann Powell (Toronto’s Puppet-mongers), who are constructing the four-foot puppets that act out the tale sung by soprano Jane Archibald, mezzo Eleanor James, tenor Eric Shaw, baritone Gregory Dahl and La Jeunesse Choir.

“The puppets are really opulent,” says Diana Smith. Along with the puppets, costumes, palace and boat, the performance includes “I’ai Chi set to Murray’s 7th Quartet, which was premiered by the Molinari Quartet about a year ago,” she says. (1-800-814-0055)

I HAVE SEEN WOYZECK performed with four-foot puppets, but that’s not the version you’ll see at the Bathurst Street Theatre from September 7 to 15. This one is an amalgam of the Alban Berg opera with the Georg Buchner play. This Wozzeck/Wozzeck directed by Theatre of Ideas’ Misha Aster, stars New Zealand actor Jonathan Roberts in the title role, with Kingston soprano Renee Sadowski as Marie. (416-870-8000)

BACK IN JULY I FLAGGED THE CCO’s TERRIFIC OPENING FOUR SHOWS: Tom Diamond’s productions of Il Tabarro and Cavalleria Rusticana; running in rep with the Robert Lapage-conceived Bluebeard’s Castle and Erwartung, between Sept 20 and Oct 6. But another big, COC-related event falls on Saturday, Sept 29: the Opera Ball. Organized by the Canadian Opera Women’s Committee, the black-tie evening takes an international theme from five famous operas: La Traviata (Italy); Boris Gudunov (Russia); The Magic Flute (Austria); Madame Butterfly (Japan), and Carmen (Spain). Jean Stilwell offers arias from Carmen; Jack Layton does his capable best to pump up a bidding frenzy at the auction, and chef John Cordeaux prepares a grand feast.


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26 Oct 2001 Daley: Requiem; Rutter: The Falcon
16 Nov 2001 Beethoven: 9th Symphony, with the Glenn Gould Professional School at the Royal Conservatory of Music
12 Dec 2001 Britten: A Boy was Born; Saint-SAëNS: Christmas Oratorio
21-22 Mar 2002 Poulenc: Stabat Mater; Liszt: Via Crucis, with the Danny Grossman Dance Company
31 May 2002 Rheinberger: Cantus Missae; Liszt: Missa Choralis; Brahms: Marienlieder

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With Orchestra

**#4 - INTERNATIONAL VOICES**
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Special Guest Artists: Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir with Special Guest Conductor: Tonu Kaljuste.
In collaboration with Soundstreams Canada

**#5 - VOICES IN CELEBRATION**
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**SUBSCRIPTION CONCERT #2**
Saturday, December 15, 2001, 8:00 p.m.
Eastern Europe
Smetana’s The Moldau; Dvorak’s Slavonic Dances
Op. 48; Weinizeig’s (Cdn) Interlude in an Artist’s Life; Chopin’s Piano Concerto #1, Guest Artist Lang Ning Liu; Rimsky-Korsakov’s Scheherazade.

**SUBSCRIPTION CONCERT #3**
Saturday, February 9, 2002, 8:00 p.m.
Italy
Rossini’s La Gazza Ladra; Canadian Music Competitions Concerto Winner; Archer’s (Cdn) Fanfare and Passacaglia; Respighi’s Ancient Airs and Dances.

**SUBSCRIPTION CONCERT #4**
Saturday, March 23, 2002, 8:00 p.m.
Britain and North America
Vaughan Williams’ The Wasps; Holst’s The Planets Suite; Ager’s (Cdn) The Solemn Land; Rachmaninov’s Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Guest Artist Ronald Tomarelli; Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess.

**SUBSCRIPTION CONCERT #5**
Saturday, April 27, 2002, 8:00 p.m.
Spain and France
Falla’s Amor Brujo; Rodrigo’s Concerto; Chabrier’s Espana; Somers’ (Cdn) Picasso Suite; Debussy’s Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun; Bizet’s Carmen Suite #2.

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7/02 - 8 PM
Janina Fialkowska, piano
Performing Schubert's Impromptus Nos. 1-4.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17/02 - 8 PM
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A lavish evening of arias and solo and chamber works from the opera stage.

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12/02 - 8 PM
Orpheus Chamber Orchestra
Los Angeles Guitar Quartet
Mozart, Symphony in C minor, Op. 183
Rodriguez, Concerto for Four Guitars and Orchestra
Bonfigli, Variation sur un theme d'O. M., Op. 44

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6/02 - 8 PM
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Philip Carrola, Demis Donoghi, Patrick Roux, Louis Filipein
Tonight's concert features quartets from the group's highly praised CD, including the evocative music of Robertson's Friends' Rose.

ENSEMBLE
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26/02 - 8 PM
Jacques Loussier Trio
Jacques Loussier, piano
Boswil Dowd, saxophone, bass
Andre Arpino, percussion
This French jazz trio has delighted fans with their recordings of Bach, Satie, Satie and Ravel.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27/02 - 8 PM
Ontario Chamber Jazz Septet
Bill Mays, Vinn Dorge, John Johnson, Phil Dwyer, P.J. Perry, Neil Swanson and Terre Clarke
This pre-Christmas concert, entitled "The Nashville Suite" will also include works by Thelonious Monk and Ravel.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19/02 - 8 PM
Judy Loman, bar
Toronto Children's Chorus
Jean Ashworth Bartle, conductor
A Christmas concert with the 65-member core of this world-famous choir, accompanied by 130 voices, harp by Judy Loman, harp, and Samuel Rosado.

SPECIAL EVENT
THURSDAY, JANUARY 31/02 - 8 PM
KRONOS QUARTET
David Harrington, violin
John Chambry, violin
Hank Dutt, viola
Jennifer Culp, cello
Three-time Grammy award-winning, Regina-born string quartet KRONOS returns to the Studio Jazz series with their quartet.

NEXUS
FRIDAY, JANUARY 25/02 - 8 PM
Bob Becker, percussion
William Cohn, percussion
Robin Engel, percussion
Russell Hammond, percussion
John Wyre, percussion
Two of the world's most remarkable ensembles come together for the first time, performing on their own and in collaboration. Don't miss this show.

SINGLE TICKETS $35
PIANO

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23/01 - 8 PM
Susan Ptla, mezzo-soprano
Members of the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra
Richard Bradshaw, conductor
The program features Arnold Schoenberg's Figaro, The Wood Dolls, from Gurrelieder and Puccini's chamber orchestra version of Wagner's Wesendonck Lieder.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6/01 - 8 PM
Edith Wiens, soprano
Rudolf Jansen, piano
An evening of songs by Hugo Wolf, including excerpts from the Siebenundachtzehn Transsionten.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14/01 - 8 PM
Kristina Szabó, mezzo-soprano
James Westman, baritone
Canadian Opera Company Orchestra & Ensemble
Richard Bradshaw, conductor
A lavish evening of arias and solo songs from the opera stage.

PIANO

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12/02 - 8 PM
Janina Fialkowska, piano
One of the leading pianists of her generation, celebrated for her masterful interpretations of the classical and romantic repertoire, performing Franz Liszt's Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen & Transcendental Etudes Nos. I- XII.

SINGERS

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23/02 - 2 PM
Wolfgang Holzmair, baritone
Russell Ryan, piano
This acclaimed Austrian lyric baritone presents a program of songs by Mendelssohn, Schubert, de Falla, Brahms and Ravel. Note early starting time.

TUESDAY, MARCH 12/02 - 8 PM
Karina Gaskin, soprano
"If there is a more accomplished and delightful soprano appearing regularly in Canadian concert halls, I do not believe I have heard her." (Global and Mail).

TUESDAY, APRIL 16/02 - 8 PM
Angela Hewitt, piano
Angela Hewitt's only Canadian recital this season will include two concerti by Bach transcribed and arranged by Beethoven ("Pastoral"). Ravel (Sonatina), and Schumann (Sonata No. 1).

TUESDAY, APRIL 30/02 - 8 PM
Richard Margison, tenor
Steven Philcox, piano
Canadian tenor Richard Margison performs French and Italian opera arias by Puccini, Verdi and Mascagni along with art songs by Schubert, Scarlatti, Glinka, Rossini, and Duparc.

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Saturday September 01
- 1:30: CAMMAC/Michael Gallery, Sunday Concert: The Travellers. 10935 Islington, Kleinburg, 905-833-1121. $8.41, $20(family), under 5 free.
- 8:00: Jazz, FM 91.7, Summer of Jazz. Doug Watanabe Quintet. Traditional jazz. Island Club, Ontario Place, 955 Lakeshore Blvd. West, 416-598-5223. Free.

Monday September 03

Wednesday September 05

Tuesday September 06
- 12:10: St. Paul's Anglican Church, Eric Robertson, organ in Recital. 227 Bloor St. East, 416-961-8116. Free.

Friday September 07
- 8:00: Centre for Vocal Artistry, BCMF, Sunday Concert: Les Delices de la Solitude. Nadina Mackie Jackson, baroque bassoon; Paul Jenkins, cembalo; Telemann, Corrette, Boismortier. 416-483-0695. Free.

Saturday September 08

Sunday September 09
- 1:30: Toronto Japanese United Church.
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Recitals at 2 o'clock

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September 23
Sue Crowe Connolly, mezzo-soprano
and Stephanie Martin, piano
Edward Elgar: Sea Pictures

September 30
Erin McPhee, soprano with Stephanie Martin,
harpsichord and Lawrence Beckwith, violin
Monteclair, Pan et Syrinx

October 7
Thanksgiving Sunday — NO RECITAL TODAY

October 14
Canadian Children's Opera Chorus, Ann Cooper Gay,
conductor, joined by guests from Germany, the Essen-Steeler
Kinder-um Jugendchor, Siegfried Kubischer, conductor

October 21
Lenard Whiting, tenor with William Shoekhoff, piano

October 28
Peter McGillivray, baritone with Andrea Grant, piano

November 4
Patricia Haldane, soprano with Stephanie Martin, piano

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Moordale Festival Orchestra
Erika Raum, violin

Sun. Sept. 30 at 3 pm - Walter Hall, U of T
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commentary, a cameo appearance by a rising young star and
affordable tickets! $25, ($20 St./Sr) 416-922-3714
Sunday September 30


- 1:00: Harbourfront Centre. Chamber Concert: The Little Prince. Lesley Arden & The Children's Trio. du Montreal Theatre Centre, 231 Queens Quay West. 416-973-4000. $8.


- 2:00: Toronto Sinfinetti/Arts Toronto. Musical Gallery. Old friends & contemporary favorites played by flute & guitar duo: artwork by children of the Avenue Road Arts School. 111 Avenue Road. 416-403-0796. $5.


Monday October 01


Tuesday October 02

- 1:00: St. James' Cathedral. Lunch Hours at St. James' Levine Kaminsuk, organ. 95 Church St. 416-364-7865. Free.


- 8:00: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. / Sinski Venetl. Claudio Simon, conductor. Walter Hall, 80 Queen's Park. 416-978-3744. 2:20, $10.

Wednesday October 03


- 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Ravel: Valses nobles et sentimentales; Berg: Violin Concerto; Tchaikovsky: Symphony #6 Pathétique. Leonidas Kavakos, violin. Sir
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Friday, Oct. 12, 2001, 8pm
The Royal Conservatory Orchestra
Simon Streatfeild, conductor
Adam Romer, violin

WEINZWEIG: The Edge of the World
BRUCH: Violin Concerto No. 1
SIBELIUS: Symphony No. 2

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The Royal Conservatory of Music
$15 Adults, $12 Students, 416 408 2824 ext. 321

COMING SOON:
Friday, Nov. 16, 2001, 8pm
The Royal Conservatory Orchestra
Leon Fleisher, conductor
André Laplante, piano

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 9 "Choral"
BRAHMS: Piano Concerto No. 2

Massey Hall
$45-$25, 416 872 4255

Friday, September 14

Sunday September 16

Friday September 21
- 8:00: Clearly Classic Concerts. Brahms:

Simon Streatfeild

The Vocal Art Forum presents
La Calisto
An opera written for the Carnival of Venice in 1651 by Francesco Cavalli

Fully-staged, with orchestra

October 10, 11, 15, 2001, 7:30 pm
The Great Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, Ontario

For reservations: vocalart@tgo.net or (416) 715-9867

The Vocal Art Forum
**Thursday October 04**

- 2:00pm: City of Hamilton/American Liszt Society/McMaster University School of the Arts: Great Romans Festivals: Donald Sutherland, organ in Recital. Litanies: Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen: Christ’s Church Cathedral, 252 James St. North, Hamilton. 905-525-9140 ext.23874. $15 for afternoon session.
- 7:30pm: City of Hamilton/American Liszt Society/McMaster University School of the Arts: Great Romans Festivals: Andre Laplante, piano in Recital. Works by Liszt, Schumann & Chopin. Convocation Hall, McMaster University, 905-525-9140 ext.23874. $15 for evening session.

**Saturday October 06**

- 11:00am: City of Hamilton/American Liszt Society/McMaster University School of the Arts: Great Romans Festivals: Scottish. Romantics Festival. Liszt arr. Penderecki Fauni: Klagen, Symphoniques. $21.00, $18.00. 905-525-9140 ext.23874. $15 for afternoon session.

**Sunday October 07**

- 9:30am: City of Hamilton/American Liszt Society/McMaster University School of the Arts: Great Romans Festivals: Jennifer McMahon, soprano & Laura Pin, piano in Recital. Songs by Verdi, Wolf & Strauss. Convocation Hall, McMaster University, 905-525-9140 ext.23874. $15 for morning session.
- 11:15am: City of Hamilton/American Liszt Society/McMaster University School of the Arts: Great Romans Festivals: Martin Beaver, violin & Valerie Tryon, piano in Recital. Beethoven: Sonata in A; Kreutzer: Sonata in C. Centenary United Church, Hamilton. 905-525-9140 ext.23874. $15 for afternoon session.
- 11:30am: City of Hamilton/American Liszt Society/McMaster University School of the Arts: Great Romans Festivals: Martin Beaver, violin & Valerie Tryon, piano in Recital. Beethoven: Sonata in A; Kreutzer: Sonata in C. Centenary United Church, Hamilton. 905-525-9140 ext.23874. $15 for afternoon session.

**Concerts at St. George's on-the-Hill 2001-2002**

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Our season opens with a delightful program of chamber music. *The Riverdale Ensemble* (our special guest this year) is an ensemble of middle aged friends who have been performing together for many years. Their program features music of the Romantic era, music that speaks to both heart and mind. This afternoon they present works by: Aram Khatchaturian, John Jacobson and Peter Schickele.

**Information:** 416-483-9284

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**Ontario Christian Music Assembly**

**40th Anniversary Celebration!**

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Leonard Kooij, Director

**Christian Festival Concert**

**Friday, November 2**

Order tickets from:
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**Tickets:**
- $26.00
- $21.00
- $16.00

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**September 1, 2001 – October 7, 2001 WholeNote 27**
ETCETERA FILE, SEPTEMBER 2001

ANOUNCEMENTS

* September 20 10:00am: Arts Toronto/Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Experience the Tosio in rehearsal with conductor Gunther Herweg. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe. Information: 416-593-7769.

* September 22 & 23 1:00-5:00: Arts Toronto/Artscape. Gibraltar Point Centre Open House. Features a Residency Program for international artists, 15 studios for musicians, composers, visual artists & writers and a Retreat Centre. Free shuttle bus to & from Ward's Island Ferry Dock, or you can walk, cycle or relax in the centre. 416-362-7834.

* September 22 to 30 10:00am-5:00: Arts Toronto/Children's Own Museum. Join Michael Anderson's song circle; meet a musician from Telemusic; participate in a sing-along; listen to stories told by Aubrey Davis & Sally Jaeger. For children up to age 8. 90 Queen's Park. 4475, free for children under age 1. PWYC Friday from 4pm to 5pm.


* September 26 10:00am: Arts Toronto/M-001/Toronto Table Ensemble Centre for World Music and Dance. Visit our studio & hear a Toronto Table Ensemble rehearsal. 50 Spadina Ave, lower level. 416-504-7092.

* September 26 12:00 noon to 3:00: Arts Toronto/Metropolitan United Church. Carillonneur Gerald Martinson conducts tours up the Carillon tower. 56 Queen St. East. 416-383-0351.

* September 26 6:00 to 9:30: Arts Toronto/River Restaurant. Java Joe's. Oasis Jazz (12-voice jazz choir) performs an eclectic repertoire of vocal jazz, gospel, international music, show tunes & old favourites. 413 Roncesvalles. 416-535-3422. PWYC.


* September 29 2:00: Arts Toronto/Canadian Opera Company. Bring your best aria & audition for the CCO. The CCO Artistic Administrator will provide constructive feedback on how to audition and what opera companies are looking for. Plastist provided. Observers welcome. Reservations required. September 14, 15, 16 & 17, 15. 227 Front St. East. 416-383-8671.

* September 29 2:00: Arts Toronto/Children's Own Museum. Join Michael Anderson's song circle; meet a musician from Telemusic; participate in a sing-along; listen to stories told by Aubrey Davis & Sally Jaeger. For children up to age 8. 90 Queen's Park. 4475, free for children under age 1. PWYC Friday from 4pm to 5pm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Choral Masterpieces begins Sept. 19, 2001
The Music of Haydn begins Jan. 30, 2002

SEPTEMBER 1, 2001 – OCTOBER 7, 2001
MacMillan! If you too took lessons a lifetime ago, we would love to hear from you. Were you a teacher? Do you have a story to share? Please send in a letter of your memories. Some may be read at the event, which will include musical performances, feature a celebrity guest MC, and a wine & cheese reception. Mark your calendar for:

November 23, 7:30 pm
St George the Martyr Church at 197 John Street
Tickets in advance (minimum) $10; $15 at the door (if available)
**DISC(S) OF THE MONTH**

**TWO HISTORIC LANDMARKS IN THE MAHLER DISCOGRAPHY RE-ISSUED**

**Mahler: Symphony No. 9**

- **Vienna Philharmonic**
- Bruno Walter, conductor
- Dutton CDBP 9708 (Budget Price)

- **New York Philharmonic**
- Leonard Bernstein, conductor
- Sony Classical AMK 60597 (Mid-Price)

Bruno Walter was Mahler's closest associate throughout their decade together at the Vienna State Opera. After 1907 they saw less of each other, as Mahler travelled to New York to conduct the Philharmonic and to work at the Metropolitan Opera. It was Walter who was entrusted with the premieres of the Ninth Symphony as well as that of Mahler's poignant song cycle, Das Lied von der Erde, following Mahler's death in 1911. Decades later Leonard Bernstein's conducting career was launched to great acclaim when the 25 year old composer filled in for an ailing Bruno Walter at a matinee performance of the New York Philharmonic on November 14, 1943.

These two historic re-issues represent landmarks in the Mahler discography. From Dutton comes Bruno Walter's 1938 live performance, cleared of surface noise and expertly edited from the original 20 sides recorded by EMI. Bernstein's performance is a studio recording from 1963, from Columbia Records' first Bernstein edition of the complete symphonies. Bernstein's taffy-pulling ritardandos, when applied toward the end of one of Mahler's more propulsive melodic contours, have a thrilling effect as the cohesion of the ensemble teeters on the verge of destruction. At other times his trademark lingering over the material verges on the soporific, notably in the foreshadowing of the finale that occurs towards the end of the third movement. In the finale itself however his approach works to perfection, with the warm yet enervating tone of the New York Philharmonic's string section wringing every last ounce of passion from the music. Walter's sense of rubato is considerably more refined. This is particularly noticeable in his superb interpretation of the second movement, a bumptious parody of a rustic Austrian Landler. He sets a blistering pace for the third movement, a diabolic scherzo which the Vienna orchestra seems a bit hard pressed to sustain at times. Walter's interpretation of the finale is oddly perfunctory however, as if he were somehow unable to come to terms personally with the complex emotions engendered by this last testament of his mentor. Despite its technological limitations, Walter's Apollonian interpretation remains as compelling as Bernstein's Dionysian vision of the work.

The Toronto Symphony Orchestra opens its season with performances of Mahler's Ninth Symphony under the baton of Gunther Herbig September 20 and 22.

**Daniel Foley**

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**DISCOVERIES**

**THE WHOLENOTE'S CD FORUM**

DISCOVERIES is a CD review section designed to complement and enhance our pre-eminent coverage of Toronto's live classical and new music concert scene, featuring reviews by WholeNote columnists and independent contributors. CDs are considered for review in the following four categories:

1. **New and Recent Releases**— newly released CDs relevant to our magazine's coverage of the music scene;
2. **“Concert prep”**— CDs, new or otherwise, which tie in with events being featured in the current issue of the magazine;
3. **“Worth repeating”**— CDs newly re-issued, or previously released but still generally available, deemed particularly noteworthy by a member of our editorial panel;
4. **“Indie list”**— Small label or independent release CDs, often featuring individuals or ensembles active in the local music scene.

**PRICE CODES for single CDs:**
- **Budget:** under $10
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- **Full Price:** $20 to $30
- **Special Import Price:** $30 and up

We think DISCOVERIES is a logical and exciting extension of The WholeNote's coverage of the Toronto music scene. We welcome your feedback and invite submissions. Catalogues, review copies of CDs and comments should be sent to: The WholeNote, 66 Bellevue Avenue, Toronto ON M5T 2N4. We also welcome your input via our website, www.thewholenote.com.

David Olds, Editor, DISCOVERIES

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32 WholeNote September 1, 2001 - October 7, 2001
NEW & RECENT RELEASES

Forgotten Songs, Forgotten Loves
Wendy Nielsen, Robert Kortgaard
Marquis Classics CDC 82165-2 (Full Price)

The texts range from the playful and adventurous to the romantic, mysterious, supernatural and tragic. Some are presented from the human perspective, others by nature personified (for example, a lively nightingale or a wise, old fir tree). Bitter-sweetness, emotional and social contradictions abound, and Ms. Nielsen is well up to the task of clearly evoking the ever-changing landscapes of the countryside and of the human heart.

Accompanied Robert Kortgaard’s sensitive phrasing serves as a subtle but effective undercurrent to these unique settings. A great CD for those settling back into city life, already feeling a little nostalgic for their summer travels.

Dianne Wells

Every now and then, we are treated to a recording that brings to light repertoire seldom heard. As implied by the title of this CD, “Forgotten Songs, Forgotten Loves,” exquisite and delightful rarities are indeed offered. With a richness of tone and warmth we more often expect from a mezzo, soprano Wendy Nielsen delivers the full range of expression this repertoire demands.

Although these songs are relatively obscure, they are certainly not inaccessible. Tuneful and melodic, they are based on the folk-idioms of the regions they spring from. The listener embarks on a journey to the heart of Eastern Europe with musical vignettes by Dvorak, Zemlinsky, Tchaikovsky and Dohnanyi.

...transcended the piano’s virtuosic and artistic possibilities, issuing forth an entirely new piano technique. Although some of the technical difficulties of an earlier edition were reduced, the Etudes still make formidable demands on the concert pianist today.

Canada’s own Janina Fialkowska, the founder of "Piano Six" who is particularly distinguished as an interpreter of Liszt and Chopin, marked the centenary of Liszt’s death in 1986 with performances of the Etudes across North America and Europe.

Recorded at Glenn Gould Studio last year, this CD captures the transcendental spirit of these monumental pieces. Beginning with an invigorating grand opening, we’re struck with an intense emotional commitment that proves to escape the confines of the extreme technical difficulties these pieces hold.

Especially successful are Etude VIII Wilde Jagd (Wild Hunt) and Etude IX Ricordanza (Remembrance) embodying tumultuous and sentimental.

Continues page 34

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(For more music by Franz Liszt check out WholeNote’s “Further Afield” listings for the City of Hamilton/American Liszt Society/McMaster University School of the Arts Great Romantics Festival October 4-7)

Veronica Materi

Violeons d’Enfer/Infernal Violins
Angèle Dubeau & La Pietà
Analekta AN 2 8718 (Full Price)

Since its founding in 1997, La Pietà, led by Quebec’s phenomenal virtuoso Angèle Dubeau - has dazzled. This is the group’s 4th CD and the program is full of music inspired through the ages by the Devil. Don’t be the least bit scared, however, as this is a fun CD and that is both its strong point and its biggest drawback. With skillful arrangements of music by Tartini, Saint-Saens and Liszt, the recording is designed to illustrate the various ways in which the Devil and the violin have been linked in the Western Classical tradition.

The playing is first-rate, as is to be expected. Dubeau leads the way with her warm tone and elegant phrasing and the rest of the group responds with precision and verve. There is, however, an annoyingly “easy-listening” atmosphere that pervades the performances. This isn’t helped by the addition of short superficial pieces by Francois Dompiere, Ennio Morricone and even The Rolling Stones.

La Pietà’s pianist Louise-Andrée Baril contributes some fine playing, and she’s also the arranger of most of the substantial music on the disc. Her take on Liszt’s first Mephisto Waltz generously shares virtuosic licks with the solo violin and her re-orchestration of a Devil-inspired Sinfonia by Boccherini is a definite highlight.

It’s a great idea for a program, but it’s almost as if the recording was designed for mindless “background” listening while sipping wine and enjoying life. Wait a minute, maybe the Prince of Darkness is at work here.

Larry Beckwith

Don Giovanni: Leporello’s Revenge
Dmitri Hvorostovsky
Canadian Opera Company Orchestra
Richard Bradshaw, conductor
Rhombus Media Film Soundtrack, CBC Records SMCD 5205 (Full Price)

Last October Canadian producers Rhombus Media launched a one-hour film, Don Giovanni: Leporello’s Revenge, at a gala party at Roy Thomson Hall, with performances by the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra. Directed by Barbara Willis Sweete, the film turned Mozart’s opera inside out, by shooting it as if it were about 1930s Hollywood actors watching the screening of their own performance of the opera.

Combined with the double-casting of internationally acclaimed Siberian baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky as both the seducer Don Giovanni and his wily servant Leporello, the device allowed for the utmost milking of the opera’s themes of deceit and concealed identity, while emphasizing the essentially similar natures of Don Giovanni and his servant.

The film soundtrack has now been released, and - except for the double casting of Hvorostovsky - it’s a surprisingly straight-up presentation of excerpts from the opera: just over an hour of music, in the usual order. Of course, in his double role, Hvorostovsky spends quite a bit of time singing dialogue with himself. It surprises me that the engineers didn’t use the possibilities of stereo recording to channel the “two” voices through separate speakers, but Hvorostovsky’s voice is more than rich and expressive enough to carry off the one-man double bill. Besides the hard-working Hvorostovsky, the CD features a roster of names that will be familiar to Toronto opera-goers, including Gary Relyea, Dominique Labelle, Liesel Fedkenheuer, Kristin Szabol, Alain Coulombe and Michael Colvin.

Sarah B. Hood

Musique du Moyen Âge et de la Renaissance
Constantinople, Kiya Tabassian
ATMA ACD2269 (Full Price)

Named after the legendary city of Constantinople which was once the cultural centre of the world, this ensemble recreates the music of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance with strong consideration for the location of this city and the surrounding influences, namely classical Persian art music and the early music of Europe. Bearing this in mind, the immediate musical impression is that of a Middle Eastern quality.

This instrumental recording features the talents of Kiya Tabassian (setar), Mike Cole (lute), Isabelle Marchand (viola da gamba), Matthew Jennerjohn (recorders), Ziya Tabassian (percussion), all of whom seem equally comfortable with integrating the free improvisatory nature of the Eastern style with the more structured European music.

This assortment of instruments can create several tonal textures, but the small, long-necked plucked-string instrument, the setar (not to be confused with the sitar), is the one which is not often associated with the early music of Europe, although it has tonal similarities to the gittern (sometimes associated with the mandora, a plucked-string instrument with a rounded back) or cittern.

Those of you who are reasonably familiar with early music will probably hear several of these tunes before—Pazzo e Mezzo, Salterello, Mignonette alleons, La tritone, Danza Alta, Rodrigo Martinez, Fato la parte—but I doubt that you have heard them played with as much verve and flair as they are played on this recording.

Frank T. Nakashima

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CONCERT PREP
Specific connections to current events

Michael J. Baker: Music from Big Pictures
Barbara Hannigan, Arraymusic
Artifact ART 018 (Full Price)

When Arraymusic artistic director Michael J. Baker died of leukemia last year Toronto lost a well-loved musical personage. On September 16 Arraymusic and the Music Gallery will mark the anniversary of Baker's passing with a memorial concert. Under his direction Arraymusic developed strong ties with Toronto's dance community, so it is only fitting that the concert will include several of Baker's dance scores and excerpts from the multi-disciplinary work Big Pictures.

Arraymusic premiered Big Pictures, a theatrical work by Baker, choreographer Bill James and painter Dan Solomon, in 1992. Of course the CD presents only "music from" the production, but the selections go along way towards capturing the haunting essence of the work, a non-linear minimalist presentation utilizing texts by the painter Paul Klee.

Scored for soprano, clarinet(s), trumpet, violin, piano, double bass and two percussionists in various combinations, Big Pictures serves as a marvellous introduction to the music of Michael J. Baker and to the possibilities inherent in the less than standard instrumentation of the Arraymusic ensemble. Highlights for me include the ensemble pieces Red Brick and Red Brick Reprise, Girl in Mourning and One Day (the first solo recordings of rising star soprano Barbara Hannigan) and Gate of the Deserted Garden, an extended duet featuring violinist Marc Sabat and pianist Henry Kucharzyk.

The September 16th event will also mark the release of a new Artifact CD of Baker's music for dance, In Paradisum: The Music of Michael J. Baker.

David Olds

Olivier Messiaen: Quartet for the End of Time
Amici Ensemble
Naxos 8.554824 (Budget Price)

It is rare in the world of contemporary music that an ensemble has the opportunity to record a work a second time, even when dealing with such a "classic" as Messiaen's Quatuor pour la fin du temps. Congratulations are due to both Toronto's Amici and to the Naxos label for recognizing merits of this project regardless of the fact that Amici's earlier Summit recording of the work is still available.

Messiaen composed the Quatuor in 1941 for the only instruments available: clarinet, violin, cello and piano. Each of the instruments (with the exception of the accompanying piano provided most admirably here by Patricia Parr) is given an extended solo movement. Joaquin Valdepeñas is exemplary in The Abyss of the Birds, his clarinet arising from silence so seamlessly that it's hard to know when the note actually begins. Cellist David Hetherington's rendering of the Praise for the Eternity of Jesus, although markedly faster than on the earlier recording, somehow manages to capture the Messiaen's seemingly conflicting performance instructions: "infinitely slow" and "ecstatic". The core members of Amici are joined for this recording by violinist Scott St. John, who shines in the Praise for the Immortality of Jesus where his warmth of tone and brilliant control in the final passage convince us that we are, in Messiaen's words, hearing "the ascension of man towards God".

Scott St. John joins Amici for their first concerts of the season: September 28 at Glenn Gould Studio and October 1 at Walter Hall.

David Olds

Alban Berg: Violin Concerto
Anne-Sophie Mutter, violin
Chicago Symphony Orchestra, James Levine
Deutsche Grammophon 437 093-2 (Full Price)

Alban Berg's Violin Concerto stands grandly in the tradition of the romantic virtuoso concerto, despite his use of the twelve-tone harmonic language and rigorous formal techniques of his teacher, Arnold Schoenberg. It is lyrical, nostalgic, and deeply moving. It even tells a story. Not surprisingly, there are a number of terrific recordings, most notably, in recent years, by Itzhak Perlman and Gidon Kremer, but the outstanding performance on CD is by Anne-Sophie Mutter.

Mutter may push the boundaries of Berg's score in her quest for a compelling interpretation, but she knows what the composer wants and she communicates it with passion and insight. The Chicago Symphony, under James Levine, provides a responsive, richly coloured partner.

No detail in the score eludes Mutter, from the poignant opening arpeggios, through the folk dance motif, the turbulent cadenza, the plaintive Bach chorale It is enough, Lord, to the heart-breaking return of the arpeggio figures at the close. Yet relentlessly she drives home the narrative of the life—and tragic death—of the 18-year-old girl to whom Berg dedicated this elegy.

This recording is available as a full-price single disc, coupled with Wolfgang Rihm's Time Chant. It is also included in a well-priced boxed set of twentieth century masterworks for violin and orchestra, aptly titled Anne-Sophie Mutter: Back to the Future (DG 463 790-2).

Deborah Rosen

R. Murray Schafer: Patria
Opening Day ODR 9307 (Full Price)

What R. Murray Schafer has been working on for the last three decades under the banner Patria is the creation of a series of events designed to meet a live audience in the fullness of its senses and, it seems, at the height of its intellect. As love propels the principle characters (two halves of a soul, questing for unity and the homeland), they journey through ancient, medieval and aboriginal cultures in various incarnations, allowing Schafer to investigate mystical themes in mythological worlds.

Music, asserts Schafer, is at the centre of his monumental project and the album Patria provides examples from four of the works. The sounds range from the eerie to the whimsical, as one guesses the soul's progress must. Excerpts from Ra depict the final judgment of a departed Egyptian king whose famous heart is weighed against the feather of truth. The haunting repetition in the score sung by sopranos Wendy Humphreys and Tannis Scott is ominous.

The tale of Theseus, Ariadne, the Minotaur and the Labyrinth, is told in The Crown of Ariadne, a dance drama featuring Judy Loman on harp and percussion. Its sixth movement, Dance of the Night Insects, is a spacious and delightful abstraction. But the sounds of real forest creatures were captured in And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon and The Princess's Aria, both recorded in the wilds around Lake Muskoka.

Like installations, the performances are site-specific. The next spectacular, the world premiere of The Palace of the Cinnabar Phoenix, will take place in the Wolverine Hills of the Oak Ridges Moraine September 13-16.

Deborah Rosen
Schoenberg: Erwartung
Alessandra Marc
Staatskapelle Dresden, Giuseppe Sinopoli
Teldec 3984-22901-2 (Full Price)

A deranged woman searching the woods for her duplicitous lover—that is what audiences will encounter when the Canadian Opera Company revives its acclaimed production of Arnold Schoenberg's Erwartung ("Expectation") in performances beginning September 21. Previous recordings have featured a riveting Anja Silja, and, more recently, a gorgeous Jessye Norman. But for shattering dramatic impact soprano Alessandra Marc and conductor Giuseppe Sinopoli have the edge. Marc reveals the layers of hallucination with overwhelming conviction. Her upper register can be harsh, and her low notes sometimes forced, but her rough edges are actually effective in conveying the disintegration of this woman's vulnerable psyche. The text is a fragmentary series of her suggestions, outbursts, accusations and questions, and Marc achieves just the right note of delirium.

But the glory of this live performance is Sinopoli's orchestra. It has been beautifully recorded, with the singer integrated into the texture, so that each instrumental line represents a voice emerging from the forest. The effect is staggering: menacing ostinati, dissolving motifs, and, at the end, ominously rising chromatic scales.

As a composer himself, (as well as psychiatrist and archaeologist), Sinopoli conducts as though he understands the mysteries of love, betrayal, and death expressed in this opera. Because this is one of his last recordings—he died in April just 56 years old—it is to be treasured all the more. As a bonus, this recording of Erwartung has been paired with a splendid performance of Schoenberg's seminal masterpiece, Pierrot Lunaire.

Pamela Margles

J.S. Bach: Sonatas for Obbligato Harpsichord and a Melody Instrument, Vol.1
Geneviève Soly, harpsichord
Jeanne Lamon, violin
Jay Bernfeld, viol da gamba
Analekta fleurs de lys FL 2 3060 (Full Price)

The designation, coloratura refers to an agile and subtle voice flexible enough to meet the demands of improvisation and tricky trilling. It is one that may commonly be identified with a puffy soprano engaged in a duel with flute. My introduction to Sumi Jo—a CD called The Art of Sumi Jo that was suggested as a cure for the mid-winter blues—relieved me of such squirrely associations replacing them with an appreciation of the enchantment her musical gifts inspire. I love the way her voice gently cascades down after reaching extraordinary heights. Hers is a voice that soars and beckons.

Her most recent offering, Prayers, opens with Ravel's Kaddisch. This sacred Hebrew prayer for the dead sets an elegiac tone that is particularly well supported by the Philharmonic Choir of Cologne on the tracks Sanctus by Charles Gounod and Zbigniew Preisner's Lucrinos, in memory of the director Krzysztof Keiszlowski. The choir and orchestra are also capable of enhancing a much livelier conversation to be found in Schubert's, Gott! Hörte meine Stimme!. In contrast Say a prayer for me tonight from Gigi is delivered with tender innocence.

The contingencies of mass marketing have required Sumi Jo to be photographed for the cover of Prayers with gilded eyes shut to alert the listener of her serious devotional intentions. Let's scoot over to Massey Hall September 22 to witness the entirety of her face and magnificent voice in more secular surroundings.

Deborah Rosen

WORTH REPEATING
Older recordings worthy of note

Folia - Canadian Woodwind Quintets
The York Winds
Centrediscs CMCCD 7301 (Full Price)

It seems to me that there is a real dearth of woodwind quintets these days. The combination of colours—flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and horn—is distinctive, and extremely flexible. The York Winds were probably the best-known woodwind quintet in Canada during the seventies and eighties. This CD reissue from the Canadian Music Centre gives us a glimpse back at the York
Winds in peak form playing music by Canadian composers Brian Cherney, Bengt Hambraeus, Norman Sherman, Robert Aitken and Michael Parker. All the works employ a distinctly modern approach...no hints of neoclassicism here. The harmonic language is colourful, and at times dissonant, but never bland.

My favourite piece on the CD is the title track Folia by Robert Aitken. The piece is a virtuosic display of extended technique in which the musicians are called upon to perform multiphonics, flutter tonguing and singing into their instruments while playing them. All of this may sound like an exercise in technical mastery, but the flurry of energetic sound that results is quite compelling.

The Canadian Music Centre is to be commended for reissuing the material on this CD. It may not be everyone’s cup of tea—if you like polite, happy classical period music this CD may not be to your taste—but if you feel adventurous, enjoy the sound of the woodwind quintet, and want music that expresses a wider range of moods and emotions, this is a recording that should be in your collection.

Merlin Williams

Great Recordings of the Century: Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky
Alban Berg Quartet
EMI Classics CDM 67551-2 (Mid-Price)

Tully Potter’s liner notes for this hybridized reissue make a strong case for linking the works of the three composers included, but to my ear Stravinsky is somewhat out of place. The Debussy and Ravel quartets, modern classics by any definition, were written a few years before and after 1900 respectively. They are both undoubtedly forward-looking works but they share a sonic lushness that is worlds away from the angularity of Stravinsky’s writing.

Dating from 1914, just a decade after Ravel’s quartet, Stravinsky’s Three Pieces reflect a different time, one in which the “war to end all wars” was just getting under way. Perhaps it is this fact that explains the dirge-like final movement. The Concertino of 1920 is quite reminiscent of more familiar Stravinsky works of that time, but the Double Canon of 1959, a dark work that utilizes some of Schoenberg’s dodecaphonic (serial) techniques, is yet another world removed.

Somehow I just don’t get the connection to Debussy and Ravel.

That being said, I’m happy to look on the inclusion of these rarely performed Stravinsky pieces as a bonus, and there is no obligation to listen to them at the same sitting as the impressionist masterpieces. The ABQ gives us wonderful performances of all the works, although I would have preferred a somewhat faster tempo in the Ravel Assez vivace pizzicato movement. EMI is to be applauded for this fine, affordable addition to catalogue.

David Olds

50 Great Recordings: Sibelius - Second Symphony/Beethoven - Fifth Symphony
Concertgebouw Orchestra, George Szell Philips 464682-2 (Mid-Price)

Years ago on the late CJRT-FM Paul Robinson and I regularly discussed “The basic repertoire.” We independently listened at home through umpteen versions of the piece under discussion and brought to the studio a handful of “finalists” for discussion. The reason I mention this is because often each of us believed we “knew” before the

Continues page 38

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initial listenings began which version we preferred, and why. It may come as no surprise that sometimes our fondest memories of cherished recordings were in grievous error. As this is not a foot race where only one recording can be in first place, there is often more than one "preferred" version of any piece. After all, this is an interpreter’s medium.

In the early sixties we were thrilled with the LP of this Sibelius Second. The faultless playing and the overall arch of Szell’s reading leading to an almost overwhelming peroration were all evidenced in this sonorous recording. We were in Sibelius heaven.

Later came the Beethoven Fifth. Once again, orchestral perfection. One of the most telling aspects of this almost white-hot reading is the way the brass cuts through in the tuttis, much as Szell balanced his Cleveland Orchestra in the same repertoire. Here though the whole panorama is richer and deeper, no doubt a reflection of the Concertgebouw itself. That’s what we thought then. This time the memories were correct.

These two great performances, now on one mid-priced disc, are even better than before. Who would have guessed, over 30 years ago, that we’d be turning cartwheels over the re-issue?

The familiar Four Polkas by Smetana open this album, in stylish and beguiling performances. Milan Kimlicka’s singular exercise in total serialism, Four Pieces for Piano (1969) receives an incisive interpretation from Kubalek but is poorly served by being shoe-horned between Smetana’s dances and the equally pleasant though ephemeral early 19th century Impromptu No.5 by Jan Hugo Vorisek. Dating from the same year as Kimlicka’s Four Pieces, Oskar Morawetz’s Suite for Piano is couched in a more conventional, late Romantic style. Improvisatory, introspective and propulsive by turns, it receives a sympathetic and poetic interpretation.

The highlight of this recording is a captivating performance of Leos Janacek’s brilliant Concertino for piano and six instruments. Cast in the Baroque “concerto grosso” format that was undergoing something of a revival at the time, the attractive melodic profile of this 1925 composition is always richly folkloristic without stooping to parody.

Echiquier’s very sketchy program notes promise a second volume of non-Czech repertoire will follow.

Bruce Surtees

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INDIE LIST
Independent and small label releases

Retrospectives Vol. 1
Antonín Kubalek, piano
Echiquier ECD 003 (Full Price)

These are brilliant, commanding performances marred only by the manner of their presentation. Remastered from LP recordings originally issued by the CBC in the 1970s, Retrospectives Vol. 1 is compiled solely from repertoire of Czech origin. This rather contrived theme is unfortunate as it perpetuates the stereotyping of a masterful artist whose musicality extends beyond national borders.

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American Dreaming
Marc Couroux, piano
XootaviP Records (Mid-Price)

Since emerging from his Montreal practice lair some years back, Marc Couroux has been a confounding and necessary presence in Canadian new music. While remaining sought-after as a performer of some of the most intricate new piano music written, his

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restlessness and perpetual redefinition have heightened initial comparison to a young Glenn Gould. Each new work he tackles spawns numerous writings, discussions, and analyses, in which he seeks the core of the music and each layer to it (see http://pages.infinit.net/kore/couroux.html). This dedicated process of research and expression, new readings and studies take him mining elsewhere, into visual arts, film, cultural anthropology, and increasingly toward improvisation, where with his brilliant technique he can explore the cracks, fissures, and unpredictabilities of human experience.

American Dreaming is a live recording of Couroux improvising after the study of filmmaker John Cassavetes. Herein, Couroux demonstrates his fascination with “areas in a seeming halfway-point between complete development and total underdevelopment... halfway states.” To borrow Raymond Carney’s description of Cassavetes work and re-apply it to Couroux, he “offers us concatenated knowing in place of consolidating knowing. Rather than rushing to a portable meaning, the [listener] is forced to live through a changing course of events. It lives in endless, energetic substitutions of one interest and focus for another, in continuous shifts of tone, in fluxional slides of relationship”. American Dreaming is a fantastically unkept truckload of ideas careening down a sometimes-frustrating thoroughfare, all revealed through Couroux’s inimitable keyboard “touch”. Despite his artistic preference of the process of becoming, over the final result, I’m grateful that he chose to document this July 4th night and make it available on CD.

Paul Steenhuisen

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